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ABSTRACT

The Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is one of the 16 subject-oriented clearinghouses operated by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. In its early years, ERIC was primarily an archive of education literature, but is has evolved into a more powerful and useful resource. This annual report details the 1995 activities of the Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation (ERIC/AE). In 1995, the Clearinghouse emphasized network building through partnerships with other organizations to aid in the distribution of information and materials and to teach about ERIC, ERIC/AE, and the Internet. A key partner has been the Adjunct Test Collection Clearinghouse of the Educational Testing Service, which provides resumes of test descriptions in conjunction with ERIC/AE and the Buros Institute. In 1995, the Clearinghouse received more than 236,000 requests for information, distributed more than 85,000 ERIC digests, and more than 145,000 other full-text resources. ERIC/AE was also active in database building in 1995, submitting 812 documents for inclusion in the database component "Resources in Education" and 880 for the "Current Index to Journals in Education." ERIC/AE produced 11 Digests in 1995, and undertook 2 initiatives that focused on user outreach. In addition, ERIC/AE was quite active in the ERIC system and the AskERIC service. (SLD)

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ED 403 282

# 1995 Annual Report

## of the

## ERIC® Clearinghouse

## on

## Assessment and Evaluation

Department of Education
The Catholic University of America
210 O'Boyle Hall
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# 1995 Annual Report

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# 1995 Annual Report of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation

## Executive Summary

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation at the Catholic University of America is one of 16 subject-oriented clearinghouses operated by the United States Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Since its inception in 1966, the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) has become one of the major bibliographic databases in the world. ERIC has acquired, reviewed, and processed more than one-half million citations that policy makers, program planners, researchers, and other users can readily identify and obtain.

In its early years, ERIC was primarily an archive of the education literature. Its prime activity was the development of its databases - *Resources in Education* and *Current Index to Journals in Education*. While this continues to be the cornerstone for all clearinghouses, ERIC has evolved into a much more powerful and useful resource. ERIC/AE and the other clearinghouses are heavily involved in providing a strong value-added service. We prepare syntheses of research on topics within our subject area, provide easy access to quality material, and serve as a central clearinghouse of scope-related activities. In the vernacular of information science, ERIC and ERIC/AE are *information providers*.

The explosive growth of the Internet has been accompanied by an increased demand for information. ERIC as a system is now widely recognized as the central source for information in the education and social science fields. We have worked to promote ERIC/AE as the central source for assessment and evaluation information. We have created numerous partnerships for electronic dissemination of information, created active gopher and web pages, established one listserv while participating in others, created pathfinders to help patrons locate information, prepared articles on Internet resources, and given several well attended workshops.

This annual report details our 1995 activities. It discusses how we acquire documents, from whom we acquire them, the processes of selection and input for the ERIC databases, user services, publications, management activities, and partnerships.

In 1995, we emphasized network building. We formed partnerships with non-profit organizations, commercial firms, book publishers, professional associations, university professors, and individuals. The common goal of these partnerships is to aid in the distribution of information and materials, and to teach about ERIC, ERIC/AE, and the Internet. These partnerships have made us into a central clearinghouse for information as well as documents. In 1995, we received more than 236,000 requests for information. This is

100-fold over the target established when we were awarded the clearinghouse operation just two and one-half years ago. In 1995 we distributed over 85,000 ERIC digests and more than 145,000 other full text resources.

A key partner in our activities has been the Adjunct Test Collection Clearinghouse at the Educational Testing Service. The Adjunct Clearinghouse provides ERIC resumes of test descriptions. These descriptions form the basis of the ERIC/ETS/Buros/Pro-Ed Test Locator Service. In 1995, the Test Locator had over 34,000 users, who conducted approximately 78,000 searches and examined over 93,000 test descriptions.

We believe this increased visibility and service to the broad education community has aided us in our acquisition efforts. Conference coordinators cooperate in acquiring materials for the ERIC System by printing the ERIC Reproduction Release Form in conference programs. Several organizations actually acquire documents for us. In 1995 we considered 2,157 documents for inclusion in *Resources in Education*. Many of these documents were transferred to other clearinghouses.

ERIC/AE was also active in ERIC database building. We submitted 812 documents for inclusion in *Resources in Education* and 880 for the *Current Index to Journals in Education*. These numbers are significantly higher than our targets of 700 each.

We produced 11 Digests in 1995: *Basic Item Analysis for Multiple-choice Tests*; *Writing Multiple-Choice Test Items; More Multiple-choice Item Writing Do's And Don'ts*; *The Program Evaluation Standards; Grading Students*; *Making the A: How To Study for Tests*; *Cost of a National Examination; Student Ratings Offer Useful Input to Teacher Evaluations*; *Item Bias Review; Assessment & Evaluation on the Internet*; and *Goals 2000 and World-Class Standards on the Internet*. Several address practical issues confronted by teachers and assessment professionals; others identify resources and policy issues.

Two initiatives undertaken in 1995 focus on user outreach. ERIC/AE forged partnerships with 12 commercial and non-commercial publishers to create a clearinghouse of book titles, *Testing in America*. The catalog presents descriptions of 40 carefully selected titles in the field of assessment which patrons may order directly from ERIC/AE. In 1995 we also initiated our Education Partners Program for Professors of Educational Research, modeled after the highly successful partners program of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Guidance. The program is designed to promote the use of the ERIC system through the carefully defined responsibilities of ERIC/AE and Research Professor Partners.

Finally, ERIC/AE has been quite active within the ERIC System during 1995. We spearheaded an AskERIC users questionnaire to obtain baseline and evaluative information about the system's e-mail reference service, and made numerous presentations about ERIC to a wide range of audiences.

# 1995 Annual Report of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation

## Introduction

The *1995 Annual Report of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation* comprises four major sections. The first, **Document Processing**, focuses on ERIC/AE activities in collecting, selecting, and processing materials for inclusion in the ERIC publications *Resources in Education* and *Current Index in Education*.

**User Services** highlights ERIC/AE's activities in direct user support such as development of reference materials and search guides, responses to patron requests for information, workshops, and conferences. This section also includes descriptions of our efforts to educate patrons in the appropriate and correct usage of reference services, particularly those generated by the rapidly evolving electronic environment; this includes our Internet activities on listservs, gopher sites, and World Wide Web pages. We also describe our connections to professional organizations and provide information on our formal partnerships.

The **Publications** section describes the publication process and our endeavors in this area. This section also presents descriptions of ERIC *Digests* generated through ERIC/AE in 1995. We describe *Testing in America,* the catalog of current literature in testing and assessment. The catalog was developed to provide patrons with a single source for ordering important publications in the field.

**ERIC System Maintenance and Improvement** describes our participation in ERIC administrative activities. These encompass review of terms for inclusion in the ERIC controlled vocabulary, and contributions to development of an AskERIC users survey and the ERIC Brag Sheet, a copy of which is attached.

Appendix A contains names of organizations with which ERIC/AE arranged to solicit papers at meetings or conferences, or with which we have Standing Acquisition Arrangements. Appendix B is a listing of the journals routinely reviewed for inclusion in the *Current Index to Journals in Education*.

## I. Document Processing

### *A. Resources in Education (RIE)*

*Resources in Education* announces recent nonjournal reports in education. The announcements, in the form of content abstracts and indexes, provide information for

accessing articles by Subject, Personal Author, Institution, Publication Type, and Clearinghouse/ED number. ERIC releases documents cited in *RIE* in both microfiche and paper or microfiche only.The determination of release format is made based on source, copyright, or ownership requirements, or for legibility and reproducibility reasons.

ERIC/AE is responsible for submitting 700 resumes per year to RIE. In 1995, we acquired 2,157 documents, 865 of which were within our scope. Of these, 812 were accepted for processing. While the apparent rejection rate was 6 percent, the actual rejection rate was higher, as borderline documents rejected by ERIC/AE are routinely transferred to other clearinghouses for second consideration.

All documents that ERIC/AE acquire for consideration for inclusion in RIE are evaluated using high standards of quality. These standards, described in Eissenberg (1989), include technical adequacy, contribution to knowledge and significance, relevance, new applications of knowledge and innovative practices, effectiveness of presentation and thoroughness of reporting, responsiveness to current priorities, timeliness, authority of author, source, or sponsor, and comprehensiveness.

We receive approximately 50% of our documents in April and May because conferences held in those months provide such a large proportion of acquisitions for *RIE*. However, we are asked to transmit comparable numbers of documents to the facility each week, and the nature of the contract dictates that we not greatly exceed the quantities of documents specified in the task order. As a result we usually have at least a one month backlog of documents ready to be shipped to the facility.

Routine documents acquired during 1995 required an average of 19 days from time of document receipt to shipment to the abstractors; 14 days for abstracting; and 50 days from receipt of the citations to shipment to the facility. Processing of priority documents averaged 10 days from time of receipt to time of shipment. We have processed priority documents in as few as 3 days.

***B. Selection and Input for Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE)***

Current Index to Journals in Education is a guide to recent journal articles in more than 800 major education-related journals.During 1995 ERIC/AE processed 880 articles from 34 professional journals, once again exceeding our goal of 700 resumes.

Selection of journal articles to be processed is based on the article's contribution of substantive new material to the body of educational information, its relationship to the field of education, and its comprehensiveness. Book reviews, editorials, letters to the editor and the like are not normally selected.

The average turnaround time between journal articles being received and their resume being transmitted to the ERIC Facility was 33 days in 1995. As with *Resources in Education*,

we pace our transmissions to assure an even flow of documents. We typically have a two or three week backlog of prepared resumes.

## II. User Services

### *A. Web and Gopher Activities and Statistics*

We view the Internet as our opportunity to become a central clearinghouse of information about assessment and evaluation. Toward that end, we maintain a web page pointing to all known assessment and evaluation resources, volunteer to post material, maintain a listserv, and post a wide range of information within our subject area. As illustrated by the attached table, we have been quite successful in our efforts.

| ERIC/AE Gopher Transactions<br>January 1 - December 31, 1995 | |
|---|---|
| Activity | count |
| Logins | 141,653 |
| Retrieved directories | 226,802 |
| Retrieved files | 105,173 |
| Searches | 140,196 |
| Retrieved from search | 219,409 |
| Retrieved binary files | 594 |
| Total Transactions | 833,727 |

A login is counted as a new user if more than one-half hour has elapsed since the user last entered the site. This provides a more realistic index than root connect count because 1) many users bypass the root to enter our gopher space, and 2) root connects are artificially high as the same user usually accesses the entry menu several times while exploring the site.

In the above chart, retrieved files are text files — mostly digests (25,035), newsletter columns, and information sheets. Searches are primarily searches of the ERIC database, Test Locator, and Digest database. Retrieved from search are mostly digests (31,851) and test descriptions (93,293). Retrieved binary files are downloaded software pertaining to assessment and evaluation and downloaded papers from our Full Text experiment as discussed in Professional Associations, AERA.

Our statistics for web usage, presented in the next table, are estimates based on a recently installed counter on our most popular web pages. The first and last listed web pages (home page and Test Locator) are primarily front-ends to our gopher. The other two items, however, are terminal points directing the user to other Internet sites; counts from them can be added to the gopher logins to provide a good estimate of the number of ERIC/AE Internet users.

**Web Page Users**
(monthly and estimated annualized counts)

| **Activity** | **count** (monthly) | **count** (est annual) |
|---|---|---|
| ERIC/AE home page | 4,230 | 44,838 |
| Search ERIC | 6,480 | 68,688 |
| *Internet Resources* | 2,160 | 22,896 |
| Test Locator | 1,500 | 15,900 |

To put these web page counts in perspective, the Medical Center Home page gets 6,000 users per month; X-files home page gets 4,500; Toyota Camry gets 4,300; Ham Radio Online Magazine gets 3,000; and the American Educational Research Association home page gets 2,000 users per month. In February 1996, the Search ERIC page was up to over 9,000 users per month.

Combining the gopher login count and relevant estimated annualized web statistics, the **estimated total number of ERIC/AE Internet users was 233,237 in 1995**. We are most excited by the counts of retrieved text files: the full text materials posted by ERIC/AE (digests, essays, newsletter articles, standards) were accessed over 231,189 times. We feel that this unprecedented amount of information utilization provides us with new responsibilities and opportunities. Accordingly we will continue to devote significant resources toward our Internet activities.

### *B. Test Locator*

The Test Locator is a joint project of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation, the Library and Reference Services Division of the Educational Testing Service, the Buros Institute of Mental Measurements at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, and Pro-Ed test publishers. It is composed of the ETS Test Collection, Buros Test Review Locator, Pro-Ed Test Review Locator, and the Pro-Ed Test Publisher Locator. While each component of the Test Locator is a major service in and of itself, putting them together provides the end-user with more than the sum of the parts. In 1995, the Test Locator had

over 34,000 users. They conducted approximately 78,000 searches and examined over 93,000 test descriptions.

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) Test Collection database contains records on over 10,000 tests and research instruments. These records describe the instruments and provide availability information. The Test Collection encompasses virtually all fields including social skills inventories for adults to education-related achievement and aptitude tests. The test descriptions are indexed with ERIC Thesaurus terms for subject accessibility. As an adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse, the ETS Library and Reference Services Division prepares the descriptions. ERIC/AE maintains the database, hosts the Search System, and puts the education related test descriptions into the ERIC database.

Users may turn to the Buros Test Review Locator for direction to test reviews and descriptions in Buros Institute for Mental Measurements publications. Reviews are not online; references are given for the print editions of *Mental Measurements Yearbook* or *Tests in Print*. The cornerstone of the Buros Institute's publishing activities, the *Mental Measurements Yearbook* (*MMY*), is a comprehensive set of consumer-oriented test reviews. It provides descriptive and evaluative information, and an extensive list of references to pertinent literature. *Tests in Print* (*TIP*) is as a comprehensive bibliography to all known commercially available, English-language tests currently in print. It contains pointers to reviews in *MMY* and a reference list of professional literature providing useful information about a specific test.

The PRO-ED Test Review Database is an online index to Pro-Ed *Test Critiques*. *Test Critiques* offers the reader crucial information on each individual test, such as practical applications and uses, settings in which the test is used, appropriate as well as inappropriate subjects, and guidelines for administration, scoring, and interpretation. Entries cite normative data, validity and reliability information, and report what other experts have said about the test. The Test Publisher Locator, originally compiled by Pro-Ed, contains the last known addresses of 470 major test publishers.

### *C. K12ASSESS-L*

K12ASSESS-L, an electronic forum for school based personnel, researchers, and others interested in issues pertaining to the assessment of students in grades K-12, was created by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation in the Fall of 1995. The goal of K12ASSESS-L is to provide educators with a fast, convenient, and topical electronic discussion forum focusing on issues related to educational assessment in grades K-12. K12ASSESS-L is rapidly becoming the place for local assessment personnel to share and obtain resources, ideas, and support. There are currently more than 600 subscribers to K12ASSESS-L and the listserv averages about 5 posts per day.

In establishing the listserv, we followed the lead of the AERA listservs and specifically stated that anything written to K12ASSESS-L would be in the public domain and available

for unlimited reproduction. This permits us to create summaries and Thread Gems (excerpted discussions on a given topic) which can be disseminated in print and electronic media. We have taken the unusual step of providing a home page for the listserv **(http://www.cua.edu/www/eric_ae/k12assess/)**. At the home page, users can subscribe, unsubscribe, review the welcome message, read about the listserv, examine the archive, and read Thread Gems.

### *D. User Services Product Development*

A traditional tool of the library science trade is the pathfinder, an annotated bibliography which steers users toward resources appropriate for a specific discipline. ERIC/AE has adapted the pathfinder to contemporary resources by creating one which identifies and describes electronically-available databases of assessment and evaluation related information. That pathfinder was published in *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice* and is used on-line by 150 patrons per day. At the request of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services, we have developed a similar pathfinder for their discipline.

Another important ERIC/AE product is the set of user instructions for accessing and navigating the ERIC Test Locator -- a database of test descriptions, test publishers, and citations to scholarly reviews.

For the significant number of requests from patrons who want general information about ERIC and the functions of our clearinghouse, ERIC/AE created a flyer describing ERIC/AE's role in the ERIC System, our scope of interests, the roles we perform for the collection and dissemination of information, and our World Wide Web and gopher site resources. The flyer also lists important ERIC phone numbers and Internet addresses.

### *E. Patron Requests for Information*

Patrons contact ERIC/AE via telephone, correspondence, and electronic mail to obtain information within our scope. In 1995, we received 2,548 e-mail queries, 923 correspondence inquiries, and 612 Telephone inquiries.

Computer searches are the primary basis of responses to all patrons, but they are not the sole information source consulted in the formulation of responses. ERIC/AE maintains a library of print resources including statistical compilations and test reviews which are also consulted. Responses sent by postal delivery typically include an information packet consisting of a cover letter which includes directions for accessing ERIC documents, printouts of ERIC database citations and abstracts; ERIC Digests, as appropriate; an appropriate ERIC Review; information on ERIC Clearinghouses, other Department of Education-sponsored projects; and other resources (including print and electronic resources) which may be useful.

Frequently asked questions of ERIC/AE:

ERIC/AE receives a wide range of questions on a wide range of topics. We routinely review the most frequently asked questions to ensure we have identified the best available resources on the topic. What follows are examples of the most frequently asked questions of ERIC/AE.

- *Do you know of any instruments to measure x characteristic of y population? (e.g., student attitudes towards mainstreaming)*
- *What is the predictive validity of the SAT? Does it discriminate according to gender and to ethnicity? What have been the trends in SAT scores in the last 20 years?*
- *How do U.S. elementary and secondary students compare with their foreign counterparts on standardized tests of achievement?*
- *Please provide information about alternative assessments, especially portfolio assessment, and methods of implementation. How do we implement portfolio assessment at x grade level?*
- *Please provide information about Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences. How is the theory of Multiple Intelligences applied in the classroom?*
- *What is the appropriate age for assessment for giftedness? What are/how do I locate appropriate measurement instruments for this purpose?*
- *Please provide general and specific information about block scheduling. What are the advantages/disadvantages of block scheduling? What are examples of other schools schedules which are based upon block scheduling?*
- *What are advantages/disadvantages/models/evaluations of year round schools?*

## Sample Patron Thank Yous to ERIC/AE

Subj: RE: Test Anxiety Citations
THANKS for the info!!!! I love the immediate results this service provides.
**********

Thank you for searching for info on rubrics for me; the materials you provided did give a nice overview. You mentioned that searches can be conducted via the Internet. I would like directions as to how to do this; I am a fairly new e-mail user and have access to both IBM and MAC formats (both with 14400 modems) if that makes any difference.
**********

Your instructions were excellent. It took several tries to get into HOLLIS, but I finally succeeded. I did find the abstract, and I want to thank you for your help.
**********

Thanks for your help. This was my first experience with an on-line search...I'm REALLY impressed. Great service especially for those of us who live close to 100 miles from nearest ERIC library. Thanks again for all the CASAS-research related material. It fits in with the project I'm working on for the class, plus a few other projects.
**********

Thanks for the excellent information on standardized testing for 1st graders. Yes, I would enjoy doing my own ERIC search on the Internet and would appreciate if you would send directions on "how to". Thanks for your help.
**********

I am writing to thank you for the ERIC search you completed for me. It has been very helpful in helping us determine a tool for assessing children. The lack of information on the BASC has helped us decide to try several assessment tools before making a decision. Again, thank you for responding.
**********

Thank you for the information you sent to me regarding portfolio assessment. It is very helpful, and I will let you know if I have any further questions. I have already received the directions for how to conduct an ERIC database search via the Internet, so I will do that next. Thank you again!
**********

I cannot thank you enough for your most valuable information. Since so many people had no never heard of the Copyright Clearance Center, I was beginning to wonder if I just dreamt about it. Thanks again!

### *F. AskERIC User Services*

The Clearinghouse on Information and Technology at Syracuse University operates AskERIC, an Internet-based service. Patrons send e-mail questions about education or educational issues to AskERIC which are then referred to specialists at the clearinghouse covering the topic. Subject specialists respond with basic reference citations and other materials tailored to the question within 48 hours. At the end of 1995, AskERIC was handling 550 questions per week of which ERIC/AE responded to approximately 50 per week.

### *G. ERIC Workshops*

ERIC/AE conducts several workshops a year for audiences which include conference attendees, university students, and clearinghouse visitors. While the majority of our presentations promote general awareness of ERIC and ERIC/AE resources, requests are increasing for workshops on ERIC and other education related Internet resources. Approximately 700 people attended our workshops.

In presenting workshops, we use an ERIC Slide show, created using Microsoft Power Point; the *All About ERIC* handbook; and relevant ERIC Digests. In addition to the slide show, the ERIC/AE presentation includes hands-on searches of the ERIC Database. The presentation covers a general explanation of ERIC, how to search ERIC effectively, ERIC System components, ERIC/AE, and ERIC resources on the Internet. Thumbnail images of selected slides are attached. A set of speaker's notes accompanies each slide in the show, allowing the presenter to redesign the show to meet the expectations of the audience. The slide show is available on 35mm slides, color overheads, and a self-contained IBM PC slide show program.

### *H. Conference on Assessment for Guidance Personnel*

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Guidance and ERIC/AE collaborated in developing a conference for K-12 student services specialists which was held in January 1995. The goals of the conference were to provide information on new developments in assessment and testing, social and political issues in assessment, and interprofessional collaboration. More than 300 people attended the conference, which featured nearly 20 speakers. ERIC/AE helped design the conference, recommend speakers, and obtain speakers. In addition we prepared a Digest, made a large group presentation, and coordinated an information exchange at the conference.

### *I. Linkages with Professional Organizations*

We have extensive links to the American Educational Research Association and the Educational Testing Service. These organizations make significant contributions of documents to our clearinghouse and the entire ERIC System.

1. American Educational Research Association

The American Educational Research Association (AERA) is the most prestigious and prominent international professional organization with the primary goal of advancing educational research and its practical application. Its more than 20,000 members are educators; administrators; directors of research, testing or evaluation in federal, state and local agencies; counselors; evaluators; graduate students; and scientists. The broad range of disciplines represented includes statistics, anthropology, and political science.

ERIC/AE assists the AERA with support and advice on telecommunications projects and provides a workshop on ERIC and Internet for the AERA home office staff. As a part of our document acquisition activities, we have a booth at the AERA annual meeting and solicit papers. As a result, the AERA refers patrons to ERIC/AE for help in locating authors of papers presented at the annual meeting.

In 1995, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation worked very closely with the AERA and the National Council on Measurement in Education in establishing an FTP site to provide improved access to the papers presented at the annual meetings. ERIC/AE created a searchable database containing short descriptor files and pointers to the full text of presentation papers uploaded by presenters, making them available for downloading over the Internet.

A copy of the joint AERA-ERIC/AE announcement for the AERA project appears on the following page. A similar arrangement was made with the National Council on Measurement in Education. The project was much more labor intensive than anticipated as few papers and descriptions arrived in the specified format. We decided not to repeat the project in the near future.

## Make your paper available on the Internet

AERA and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation are pleased to announce a joint Internet project designed to facilitate the exchange of papers and information from the annual meeting. In addition to submitting a paper copy of your paper to ERIC, please submit an electronic copy of your paper and a description file. ERIC/AE will post the papers and descriptions at their gopher site (GOPHER.CUA.EDU under Special Resources/ Essays, Bibliographies & Resources/AERA Annual meeting).You will also be able to obtain the papers from the AERA gopher site (INFO.ASU.EDU under ASU Affiliated Organizations/ AERA/ Annual Meeting/).

You may FTP your description and paper to FTP.EDUC.CUA.EDU, e-mail them to ERIC_AE@CUA.EDU (uuencoded), or mail them on diskette to AERA Papers, ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC 20064.

The description should be in 70 column ASCII text format. The filename should be the session number, followed by the 3 letter initials of the first author and ".TXT", e.g. 0102GLM.TXT. The first line should contain the file name and abbreviated title of the paper, e.g. 0102GLM - The counterbalanced equating and scale design. The description should then contain full title, author names, a 150 word abstract, information about the format of the paper (Word, WordPerfect, etc.), and e-mail and postal addresses.

The second file should contain the full paper. Any format (Word, WP, Ami Pro, PC, Mac) can be used as long as everything is contained in a single file. This means that figures need to be embedded or the paper combined into an archive file format, such as a ZIP. Papers that are not in a compressed format will be ZIPped by ERIC/AE.

AERA/ERIC FTP site announcement

2. Educational Testing Service

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) is a leader in educational research and testing. It is the world's largest private nonprofit educational assessment and measurement institution serving a wide variety of clients in education, government, business, and the professions. While known primarily for the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), ETS is also known today for significant contributions to measurement science, computer-based testing technology, new modes of assessment, and a deeper understanding of teaching and learning.

In addition to the Test Locator project, we have had extensive contact and interaction with several divisions of ETS. During 1995, ERIC/AE arranged to archive the entire collection of ETS Research Memorandum. We also provided information on the SAT recentering and became a distributor of ETS produced material on test taking skills. Since ETS now provides us with unlimited quantities of their publications on test taking, ERIC/AE has combined digests prepared on the topic with the ETS materials to create an information package for responding to patron inquiries.

### *J. Partners*

ERIC/AE maintains three formal partners programs. These partnerships are with professors of research, electronic publication partners, and book publishers (book publishers are discussed in the Publications section).

1. Electronic Partners

Our electronic partners routinely provide us with materials for the gopher and web sites, aid in acquisitions, and aid in disseminating information about the clearinghouse. For example, Industry Canada's Community Access Initiative maintains a listserv dedicated to announcing and reviewing new useful websites for K-12 educators. We maintain a gopher/web page archiving their reviews and are co-administrators of their listserv.

In 1995, we worked with the following electronic partners:

American Educational Research Association
Association for Institutional Research
Buros Institute for Mental Measurements
Educational Testing Service
Reference Service Division
FairTest
Industry Canada's C-Net
Pacific Lutheran University
PAR Systems User Group
Portfolio Workbook
Pro-Ed
Rasch Measurement SIG

2. Education Partners Program for Professors of Educational Research

ERIC/AE's Education Partners Program, introduced at the end of 1995, is designed as a collaborative effort between ERIC/AE and university staff. The program is designed to increase awareness of the ERIC system and to expand the use of systematic searches of the ERIC database and ERIC/AE resources and publications. It also seeks to develop the information research skills of faculty and students who enroll in measurement and/or research courses while promoting the sharing of education research resources. Our pioneering education partners are LearnWell Resources, Camino, California; Massachusetts Bay Community College; and Western Kentucky University.

As an affiliate of the ERIC system, the partner is entitled to benefits which include discounts or loans of some instructional materials. Partners may request master copies of ERIC/AE *Digests* for use as classroom or workshop handouts, and may request up to six customized searches of the ERIC database per semester to use as supplemental course bibliographies. As encouragement to become active contributors, Partners receive special "quick turn around" consideration of staff and student written materials for inclusion in the ERIC database.

In return, Partners agree to share responsiblity for ERIC education efforts, to promote the use of ERIC, and to be active contributors to the system. As their contribution to the assessment, evaluation and research literature base, partners agree to submit at least five high quality student or faculty written papers to be considered for input into the ERIC database.

## III. Publications

### *A. Product development and review*

It is the publication series, more than any other activity, that makes the ERIC system more than a simple repository. ERIC publications get information into the hands of people who would not otherwise be able to obtain it. They also advance the state of educational practice by keeping people informed of the latest ideas and resources. Publications increase ERIC's visibility as patrons use ERIC *Digests* in newsletters and as class handouts. Finally, the publications enhance the credibility of the clearinghouse, and generate goodwill and improve acquisitions.

To aid authors and to explain the Digest Development cycle, we have prepared a *How to Write an ERIC/AE Digest*. This booklet contains the OERI *Digest* guidelines and explains what *Digests* are, the required format, our editing policy, and our review policy.
All ERIC/AE products go through several rounds of editing and review. We believe firmly that all documents can benefit from professional editing. Accordingly all ERIC/AE publications, including *Digests*, are edited to improve English usage and structure. In addition to routine proofreading, attention is given to grammar, presentation, structure, and transitions. The author reviews the edited version to assure subtle content changes have not been introduced and provides final approval.

### *B. Digests*

*Digests* are generated either by outside experts, or by in-house staff. Although *Digests* are an identifiable product line, it is possible to distinguish several, not necessarily mutually exclusive, types that address specific audiences and/or purposes. When developing *Digests*, we consider the types outlined by Central ERIC: *Overview* (introduction to a topic); *Fact Sheet* (current information of a factual nature related to a topic); *Issue* (defines and describes a controversial topic); *Practice Application* (provides specific, concrete examples of how practitioners can apply research results in practical settings); *Research Findings* (reports on the current status of research in an area); *Synopsis of Synthesis Paper* (summarizes an existing review and synthesis publication); and *Digests*.

We distribute *Digests* free of charge to contributors of articles within our scope, test publisher's representatives, and others asking to be placed on our *Digest* mailing list. We also routinely send *Digests* to conference coordinators for placement on exhibit tables. We often distribute *Digests* as a direct response to user inquiries. As shown in the following chart, we distributed 85,982 Digests during the year.

**ERIC/AE Digest Distribution**
January 1 - December 31, 1995

| Activity | count |
|---|---|
| On-line Digest database | 31,851 |
| Alternative Assessment on-line | 20,652 |
| *Assessment and Evaluation on the Internet* | 22,896 |
| Other posted AE Digests | 4,383 |
| Mail distribution | 6,200 |
| Total Transactions | 85,982 |

Titles of ERIC/AE Digests Published in 1995

*1. Basic Item Analysis for Multiple-choice Tests, Jerard Kehoe*

This Digest offers some suggestions for the improvement of multiple-choice tests using "item analysis" statistics. These statistics are typically provided by measurement services, where tests are machine-scored, as well as by testing software packages. The basic idea that we can capitalize on is that the statistical behavior of "bad" items is fundamentally different from that of "good" items. Of course, the items have to be administered to students in order to obtain the needed statistics. This fact underscores our point of view that tests can be improved by maintaining and developing a pool of "good" items from which future tests will

be drawn in part or in whole. This is particularly true for instructors who teach the same course more than once.

*2. Writing Multiple-Choice Test Items, Jerard Kehoe*

A notable concern of many teachers is that they frequently have the task of constructing tests but have relatively little training or information to rely on in this task. The objective of this Digest is to set out some conventional wisdom for the construction of multiple-choice tests, which are one of the most common forms of teacher-constructed tests. The comments which follow are applicable mainly to multiple-choice tests covering fairly broad topic areas.

*3. More Multiple-choice Item Writing Do's And Don'ts, Robert B. Frary*

*Writing Multiple-Choice Test Items* (listed above) gives limited suggestions for item-writing due to its coverage of other aspects of test development. *More Multiple-choice Item Writing Do's And Don'ts* presents a fairly comprehensive list of recommendations for writing multiple choice items. Some of these are backed up by psychometric research; i.e., it has been found that, generally, the resulting scores are more accurate indicators of each student's knowledge when the recommendations are followed than when they are violated. Other recommendations result from logical deduction.

*4. The Program Evaluation Standards*

Sound evaluations of educational programs, projects, and materials in a variety of settings should have four basic attributes: utility, propriety, feasibility, and accuracy. *The Program Evaluation Standards*, established by sixteen professional associations, identify evaluation principles that when addressed should result in improved program evaluations containing the above four attributes. This digest is a summary of the *Standards*.

*5. Grading Students, Lawrence H. Cross*

Some instructors record letter grades for tests and assignments, and others record numerical values, often the percent correct on tests. Later, under either method, the grades are averaged, often employing a weighting process designed to make some grades count more heavily than others. Discussion of the merits of different approaches usually center around comparative advantages of averaging letter or numerical grades, or around some feature of the weighting process. This Digest discusses several aspects of assigning grades. First, variability of test scores, an issue that underlies for both approaches, is discussed. The use of standardized scores is presented as a solution to the variability problem, ideas on assigning letter grades, and recommendations are then presented.

*6. Making the A: How To Study for Tests, Diane Loulou*

Tests are one method of measuring what you have learned in a course. Doing well on tests and earning good grades begin with good study habits. If your goal is to become a successful student, take the time to develop good study habits. This digest offers a plan to help you study for tests. It explains how to prepare for and take tests. Techniques for taking essay, multiple choice and other types of exams are reviewed. Although these techniques

may help you improve your test scores, other factors, such as class participation, independent projects and term papers also contribute toward grades.

*7. Cost of a National Examination*

Recent proposals from the federal executive branch and private groups have drawn unprecedented attention to the idea of a national examination for elementary and secondary students. The House Committee on Education and Labor asked GAO to look at school testing as it exists today, describe its nature, estimate its extent and cost, and assess how a new, national test might affect those factors. This digest provides a summary of *Student Testing: Current Extent and Expenditures, with Cost Estimates for a National Examination*. Report of the United States General Accounting Office, GAO/PEMD 93-8.

*8. Student Ratings Offer Useful Input to Teacher Evaluations, condensed from "Using Student Ratings in Teacher Evaluation," by Michael Scriven*

Student ratings of instruction are widely used as a basis for personnel decisions and faculty development recommendations in post-secondary education today. This article addresses concerns about their validity and presents a case for the use of student ratings in teacher evaluation.

*9. Item Bias Review, Ronald Hambleton and Jane Rodgers*

When important decisions are made based on test scores, it is critical to avoid bias, which may unfairly influence examinees' scores. Bias is the presence of some characteristic of an item that results in differential performance for individuals of the same ability but from different ethnic, sex, cultural, or religious groups. This digest introduces three issues to consider when evaluating items for bias -- fairness, bias, and stereotyping. The issues are presented and sample review questions are posed.

*10. Assessment & Evaluation on the Internet, Liselle Drake and Lawrence Rudner*

With tens of thousands of information providers and millions of users, the Internet is an enormous and growing resource for measurement professionals, researchers, curriculum developers, evaluation personnel and others involved or interested in assessment issues. The task for busy professionals is to be able to rapidly identify Internet resources so they can be efficiently incorporated in their work. In this digest, we identify Internet resources of particular interest to the assessment community. Gopher sites and web sites are identified and discussed.

*11. Goals 2000 and World-Class Standards on the Internet*

Many organizations, schools districts, and state departments of education are posting useful materials on the Internet. These materials can prove to be a valuable resource for anyone interested in Goals 2000, World-Class standards, and school restructuring. The digest identifies key Internet offerings related to Goals 2000 and World Class standards. Pointers to each of these offerings can be found at the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation (ERIC/AE) gopher site (gopher.cua.edu, special resources, ERIC, Goals 2000). The broad target audience for these materials includes parents, teachers, school

administrators and others concerned with improving education. The information includes activities at the local, state and Federal levels.

### *C. Catalog*

In order to provide patrons of our clearinghouse with current literature on topics of assessment and evaluation, we have created a catalog of current book publications in our field. In October of 1995, ERIC/TM printed the first edition of *Testing in America: A Collection of Titles from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation*. The catalog includes titles about general reference in testing standards, research and methodology, student evaluation, teacher evaluation, program evaluation, learning theory, educational reform, and the ERIC Database on CD-ROM. We believe the titles selected are outstanding in the addressed areas, and can help direct solutions to contemporary education problems.

The catalog contains books by the following publishers:

Addison-Wesley Publishing
American Psychological Association
Australian Council for Educational Research
The Brookings Institute
Buros Institute for Mental Measurements
Corwin Press, Inc.
FairTest
Greenwood Publishing Group
Oryx Press
Sage Publications, Inc.
Scholastic Inc.
Teachers College Press

All publishers included in the catalog agree to allow ERIC/AE to sell books to patrons at the publishers' list prices. In turn, we buy the books from the publisher at a negotiated discount of 20% to 50%, returning the profits to the clearinghouse to pay for costs of production. Publishers' distributors drop ship the orders directly to customers. Although all terms of the proposal are negotiable, only two aspects of the agreement are currently variable: some publishers prefer to send stock to us instead of drop shipping, and the discount varies.

ERIC/AE markets *Testing in America* to superintendents in school districts, dioceses, regional centers, county superintendent offices, state departments of education, and public schools. Our next marketing project will be to post the catalog at the ERIC/AE home page on the World Wide Web; patrons will be able to browse the list of titles and submit orders to our book business manager via E-mail.

# IV. ERIC System Maintenance and Improvement

## *A. Vocabulary Review Procedure*

ERIC/AE participates in the development of the internationally-renowned ERIC system controlled vocabulary. We discuss terms with the Vocabulary Review Group and expand the list of terms applicable to our clearinghouse scope. Because of the great interest in alternative forms of assessment and performance based assessment, ERIC/AE will be formally introducing several descriptors related to these concepts early in 1996.

## *B. ERIC Task Force Activities*

ERIC/AE was active in several important system-wide initiatives during 1995. We participated in the Task Force which conducted the AskERIC Users Survey and an ad hoc group which developed the "ERIC Brag Sheet."

### 1. AskERIC Users Survey

AskERIC is a system-wide service whereby patrons e-mail questions to ERIC and receive a response within 48 hours. Two ERIC/AE staff members led a Task Force which conducted a survey of AskERIC users. The goal was to obtain baseline data concerning who was using the service and their level of satisfaction. A questionnaire was piloted, revised and, in December 1994, distributed electronically to 400 AskERIC users. Results were tallied and released in February 1995. Usable responses were received from 101 respondents - 84 via e-mail and 17 by postal mail. The margin of error with this sample is between 3 and 10% at the 95% confidence level.

Key Findings of the Study

- Over two-thirds (68%) learned of AskERIC via a menu item at their local gopher, referral or workshop.
- Almost all respondents (97%) would recommend AskERIC to someone else.
- AskERIC users are primarily k-12 educators (68%), with half of the k-12 users being teachers and the rest evenly divided between administrators and librarians.
- The most common reasons for using the AskERIC service were to improve classroom practice, professional interest, and help a colleague.
- Only 5% of the respondents were using the service to help fulfill a school assignment.
- Some 95% said they were satisfied with the speed of the response (which is 48 hours or less). Ninety-four percent felt the response was appropriate to their question.
- Eighty-eight percent were satisfied with the quality of the response.

2. ERIC Brag Sheet

Recognizing the need to develop a simple information sheet about ERIC, an ad hoc group spearheaded by ERIC/AE produced what has come to be referred to as the *ERIC Brag Sheet*. This information sheet, written in May 1995 and included as Appendix C, provides basic information about what ERIC does, who it serves, and where it is going. The *Brag Sheet* is now widely used as a short description of the ERIC system.

## References

Drake, L. Rudner, L, & J. Pierce (Nov, 1995). Assessment and Evaluation on the Internet *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice.*

Eissenberg, T.E. (1989). An Evaluation of ERIC/AE's Review Process. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council on Measurement in Education (San Francisco, CA, March 28-30, 1989). ERIC Document Reproduction Service Number ED307335.

## Appendix A: Conference-Wide Paper Solicitation and Standing Acquisition Arrangements

*Organizations Providing Papers from Annual Meetings and Conferences*

American Educational Research Association
American Evaluation Association
Canadian Evaluation Society
Council of Chief State Schools Officers
Eastern Educational Research Association
Florida Educational Research Association
Georgia Educational Research Association
Hawaii Educational Research Association
International Personnel Management Association
Mid-South Educational Research Association
Mid-Western Educational Research Association
National Center for Education Statistics
National Council on Measurement in Education
New England Educational Research Organization
Northeastern Educational Research Association
Pennsylvania Educational Research Association
Qualitative Interest Group
Southwest Educational Research Association
Texas Association for Institutional Research
United Federation of Teachers

*1995 Standing Acquisition Arrangements*

Akron Public Schools
Albuquerque Public Schools
American Council on Education
American Educational Research Association
American Evaluation Association
Austin Independent School District
Buffalo Public Schools
Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing
Cleveland Public Schools
Corpus Christi Independent School District
Dade County Public Schools
Dallas Independent School District
Des Moines Public Schools
East Baton Rouge Parish School Board
Edmonton Public Schools
Educational Testing Service
Policy Information Center
Research Department
Test Collection
Florida Educational Research Association
Fort Worth Independent School District
Goteborg University
Hartford Public Schools
Home School Legal Defense Association
International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
International Personnel Management Association
Jefferson County Public Schools
Los Angeles Unified School District
Mesa Public Schools
Mid-South Educational Research Association
Minneapolis Public Schools
National Assessment Governing Board
National Assessment of Educational Progress
National Center for Fair and Open Testing

National Center for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation
National Commission on Testing and Public Policy
National Council on Measurement in Education
National Research Center on Student Learning
Nevada State Department of Education
Newark Board of Education
North Dakota University
North York Board of Education
Oakland Unified School District
Palm Beach County School Board
Philadelphia School District
Rochester City School District
Sacramento City Unified School District
Saint Louis Public Schools
San Antonio Independent School District
Scarborough Board of Education
South Dakota State Department of Education and Cultural Affairs
Texas University
Virginia Beach City Public Schools
Wake County Public School System
York Region Board of Education

## Appendix B: Journals Reviewed for Inclusion in CIJE

*Comprehensive Coverage:*

American Educational Research Journal
Educational Research Quarterly
Journal of Educational Measurement
Journal of Educational Psychology
Journal of Educational Statistics
Review of Educational Research
Studies in Educational Evaluation
Applied Psychological Measurement
Applied Measurement in Education
Educational and Psychological Measurement
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice
International Journal of Educational Research
Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education

*Education: Comprehensive*

The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation
Cognitive Psychology
Contemporary Educational Psychology
Evaluation Practive
Evaluation Review
Intelligence
Learning & Instruction: The Journal of the European Association on Learning & Instruction
New Directions for Program Evaluation
Psychological Review
Psychometrika
Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research

*Selective*

Assessment Update
Canadian Journal of Education
Evaluation and Program Planning
Evaluation and the Health Professions
Journal of Experimental Education
Assessment
Journal of Youth and Adolescence
Multivariate Behavioral Research
Psychological Assessment

## A Little About ERIC (1995)

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is the nation's information network connecting virtually all educational information providers and educational information users. ERIC is a public service that uses technology to increase access to education research and practice to improve learning, teaching, and community-based educational decision-making.

**ERIC offers the substantive information people need.**

- The ERIC database includes summaries of nearly 900,000 of the best peer-reviewed documents and journal articles on education research and practice written since 1966. The ERIC database is the third most frequently used database in any field (*Computers in Libraries*, February 1995).

- Via the Internet, ERIC provides electronic access to a wide range of educational information and resources including full-text lesson plans and tests, thematic essays, reference material, and pointers to what others are doing. Over 30,000 people log onto ERIC Internet sites, weekly. ERIC is frequently cited among the most useful places to visit (*Internet World*, January 1995; *PC Computing*, May 1995).

- ERIC currently produces and disseminates 1,500 briefing papers with over 150 titles added annually. These syntheses provide balanced coverage of all the important education topics, including educational management, assessment, professional development, technology, and reform.

- ERIC is a mediated education information system. Each year, the 16 subject-oriented ERIC Clearinghouses respond to over 50,000 email and telephone requests.

**ERIC has a tremendous audience.**

- Each year, more than 4,200,000 people use the ERIC database, the network of subject-oriented clearinghouses, and the various information services available through the Internet and commercial computer services.

- Teachers in K-12 schools, universities, colleges, corporations, and public institutions consistently make use of ERIC information to help with decision-making and practical improvements in the education process.

**ERIC brings efficiency and economy to the education community.**

- By offering a well-organized central repository for education information, ERIC streamlines educational decision-making. Local and state agencies naturally turn to ERIC rather than duplicating the costs that would be incurred if they had to research, identify, and collect material from multiple sources.

- By identifying other organizations that have addressed similar issues, ERIC helps local and state education agencies learn from each other.

**ERIC leverages partnerships.**

- The federal investment forms the hub for many interconnected partnerships. These coordinated efforts with public and private partners enable ERIC to effectively and efficiently provide enhanced products and services. Heinmiller (*Cost and usage study of the ERIC System*, 1981) estimated that each $1 of federal investment was leveraged to more than $20 in ERIC associated activity.

- The ERIC system currently maintains formal partnerships with more than 400 education organizations to aid in the development, announcement, and distribution of education information.

- ERIC maintains no-cost-to-the-government corporate partnerships which provide print materials, document delivery as well as improved document acquisitions. These corporate partnerships include companies such as Computer Science Corporation, the Ford Foundation, the Educational Testing Service, and the American Bar Association.

- Companies such as Apple Computer and Sun Microsystems have made significant equipment donations.

**ERIC capitalizes on technology for continuous improvement.**

- ERIC has a history of technological innovation, first as the creator of the first commercial online database in the 1960s, then as an early adopter of CD-ROM technology in the 1980s.

- ERIC now offers the award-winning AskERIC question-answering service and Virtual Library; the National Parent Information Network; and more than a dozen subject-oriented gopher/World Wide Web sites on the Internet.

**ERIC is highly customer-driven.**

- ERIC is beta testing an Internet site that will offer free database access and a powerful search engine to dozens of simultaneous users.

- ERIC is moving toward delivering documents in full-text electronic format.